

## THE DEMORALIZING DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH.

From the Flaming Sword.

He is a poor observer of events who cannot see history repeating itself in the affairs of the United States, writes S. S. King in his great production, "Bondholders and Bread-winners." Nations have risen and fallen, leaving their tombs as gloomy monuments along the great highway of the world's history. A fatal evil with many of them was the gathering of vast wealth into the hands of a few. Do such symptoms threaten the well-being of this nation to-day? Let us see.

Last summer Superintendent Porter sent out census bulletin No. 104, relating to the assessed value of property in the United States, whereby it appeared that a very gratifying increase had been made during the past decade, the total now exceeding twenty-four billions. Then all the good, orthodox brethren of the two old parties fell to figuring. They were sure the actual value was two and one-half times the assessed value. Then twenty-four billions and something, multiplied by two and one-half, yielded sixty-two billions and something, and this divided by sixty-two millions and something (the number of people), resulted in a quotient of 1,000. The figuring was faultless and the conclusion was correct. Therefore, the average actual wealth of every man, woman and child in the nation was \$1,000! Then the orthodox party organs shouted and shrieked, "Hurrah! Richest nation on earth! Every man, woman and child worth \$1,000!" (At this writing, some months later, there are several parties still anxiously looking for their share.) The only thing on which the organs differed was as to the proper meed of praise that should be awarded to each party for this great result; the writer, desiring to be an impartial arbiter between the Republican and Democratic parties, would award to the former party six-tenths of all the glory of financial legislation in the last decade, on the basis that it has been in power six years. The Democrats must content themselves with four-tenths.

But is the nation rich because the people possess sufficient wealth, if evenly distributed, to give each person \$1,000? If every person has \$1,000 it may well be said that the nation is rich. But when a small percentage of the people possesses vast wealth, and that rapidly increasing, while a large percentage possesses little or nothing and that rapidly decreasing, the nation is neither rich nor prosperous. Suppose a hundred families, of four persons each, live upon and own a hundred farms, and these farms show a gratifying increase in value during the past decade, so that each family's possessions should be worth \$4,000. Here each person would possess an average actual wealth of \$1,000, and the community would be a happy, prosperous and wealthy one. But suppose that ninety-seven of these families are living upon mortgaged farms, their debts increasing faster than their farm values, the community as a whole still showing a very gratifying increase in wealth, but all that increase being in the hands of the three men who operate the bank, the railroad, and the factory, could it then be said that the community was a happy, prosperous or wealthy one? Hardly. The three families would be prosperous—eminently so—while the ninety-seven would be drifting to inevitable ruin, notwithstanding the same total wealth might exist in the community as in the first case. As well might the ninety-seven shout over the accumulated wealth of the other three—their banker, railroader, and manufacturer—as that ninety-seven-hundredths of American

citizens should shout over the increase of wealth of the other three-hundredths—their bankers, railroaders and manufacturers.

A great boomerang to the party in power will be the eleventh census, if ever completed. It will show a vast aggregation of wealth in the hands of the few, and the detrimental effect which this aggregation has had upon the industrial and agricultural classes. It will show, plain as proof of Holy Writ, the fostering care which the government has bestowed upon the banker, the railroad owner and the manufacturer, and the utter neglect of the interests of the farmer and the laborer. It will show the gulf between the patrician and the plebeian growing broader and deeper during the past decade. The earnest reformer of things politically evil will need no text-book but Mr. Porter's eleventh census report, and not having that in time for use next year, will be able to proceed very nicely with the bulletins that are being sent out.

## HE WILL HAVE TO TRY AGAIN.

From the New Nation.

A lady writes to the *Open Court*, of Chicago, as follows:

Can any philosopher specify what particular right or piece of liberty he now enjoys which nationalism must necessarily wrest from him? Suppose the nation should assume control of the telegraphs, as Mr. Wainwright recommends, and messages be sent at cost, what would happen to our liberty?

The philosopher who comes forward to reply is F. M. Holland, and his answer is as follows:

We have just seen a president, who was very far from being the most popular man in his party, renominated by delegates whose votes he had secured by giving places to them and their friends. Whether he is elected will depend largely on how hard his office-holders work for him. If nationalism should give the next president command over all the telegraph operators and railroad men, his power to get himself renominated and re-elected would be three or four times as great as at present. He could have another term with little opposition, or sell the succession on his own terms.

What reason has Mr. Holland to suppose that nationalism would give the president, or any other official, power over telegraph operators and railroad workers? That is the way things are run now in this country, no doubt; but it is precisely because they are so run that nationalism is coming to reform them. It is a funny sort of logic that points to the abuses of the existing system as an argument against changing it. In no single respect would nationalism so immediately and completely change the present system as in respect to the tenure of their positions by public employees. It might, indeed, be roughly defined as a plan to provide every man with a job adapted to powers and guarantee it to him during good behavior.

Under nationalism the president would have no more power over the appointment, promotion or dismissal of public employees, except the heads of great departments, than he now has over the private affairs of the man in the moon.

Does this seem "an iridescent dream?" On the contrary, it is an ideal that does not even need to wait for nationalism to be attained. It already is an accomplished fact in the civil service of Great Britain and India. When Gladstone takes office as prime minister next month he will have power to fill but sixty-five offices.

Would Mr. Holland like some assurance other than the *New Nation's* as to the policy which the Nationalists intend to pursue as to public offices when they come to power? Let him then read the following from the platform of the Peo-

ple's party, adopted at Omaha, July 4, by a convention largely composed of Nationalists:

We believe that the time has come when railroad corporations will either own the people or the people must own the railroads, and should the government enter upon the work of owning and managing any or all railroads, we should favor an amendment to the constitution by which all persons engaged in the government service shall be placed under a civil service regulation of the most rigid character, so as to prevent the increase of the power of the national administration by the use of such additional government employees.

Mr. Holland will have to take his pen in hand once more and make another effort to answer that question.

## THE M'GARRAHAN VETO.

From the Rocky Mountain News.

A few days since congress did tardy justice to one William McGarrahan by passing a bill ordering his claim against the New Idria Mining company sent to the court of land claims for adjudication and adjustment. The matter has been before congress many years, and as it was a fight of one man against a rich and powerful corporation it has dragged along from one session to another until McGarrahan has become an old and worn-out man. It appears that some twenty or more years ago this New Idria company by chicanery, fraud and the prostitution of official influence beat McGarrahan out of certain property, and the latter appealed to congress for redress. When a hearing was finally obtained the senate judiciary committee made a unanimous report in his favor, and the same was passed by the senate without a dissenting vote, and by the house with practical unanimity. The

bill did not carry a dollar of appropriation, but merely authorized the court, whose members were appointed by President Harrison himself, to investigate the merits of McGarrahan's claim against the New Idria company.

This bill the president has vetoed, and no small amount of indignation has been expressed at Washington over the act. The reason for this act of executive injustice is easily found. Mr. D. O. Mills, of California, is a large owner of New Idria mining stock. Mr. Mills is the father-in-law of Whitelaw Reid, the Republican nominee for vice president. The president did not desire to injure Mr. Mills, whose big barrel is expected to be at the service of the Harrison campaign committee. Hence an act of gross executive injustice in the veto of a bill that merely sent the case to a court for hearing as to title.

Evidently the New Idria company must be afraid of its title or it would welcome the opportunity to have a court pass upon it. Evidently, also, there must be some justice in McGarrahan's claim, or it would not have been unanimously passed by the able lawyers of the judiciary committee of the senate. The president, however, sides with the corporation as against the individual, and all for the reason that the father-in-law of his running mate on the national ticket is a large stockholder in the said corporation. The act is eminently characteristic of Benjamin Harrison, who also espouses the cause of Wall street as against the miners of Colorado, the farmers of the west and the cotton growers of the south.

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